

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 IO-12 EUR-25 DPW-01 AID-20 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 RSR-01 OMB-01 /141 W
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P R 110831 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1525

INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8325

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR MAY 10, 1973

FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO BEING REPEATED

QUOTE

CAN THO 0301

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MARR, CA, CB, HU, ID, PL, VS

SUBJECT: SITREP FOR MAY 10, 1973

1. SUMMARY: HONG NGU DISTRICT REMAINS RELATIVELY QUIET. DINH TUONG POLICE HAVE ARRESTED A VC SUSPECT IN TDBE APRIL 23 VIET HAI RESTAURANT BOMBING IN MY THO. ETHNIC CAMBODIANS IN BAC LIEU BLAME GVN OFFICIALS FOR THE APRIL 3 ASSASSINATION OF AN INFLUENTIAL MONK. END SUMMARY.

2. SECURITY SITUATION: (A). MR IV REPORTED 47 ENEMY- INITIATED INCIDENTS ON MAY 9. AMONG THEM WERE SIX GROUND ATTACKS, 30 ABF, NINE HARASSMENTS, AND TWO INCIDENTS OF INFILTRATION. FRIENDLY LOSSES REPORTEDLY WERE 21 KILLED, 99 WOUNDED, AND ONE MISSING. THE VC/ NVA LOST 36 KILLED.

(B). BG TRAN BA DI, NINTH ARVN DIVISION COMMANDER, TOLD A
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CONSULATE GENERAL OFFICER MAY 9 THAT THE EMBATTLED HONG NGU DISTRICT HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET SINCE APRIL 26. THE VC/ NVA CONTINUE TO FIRE HARASSING MORTAR AND ROCKET ROUNDS FROM CAMBODIA BUT ARE NOT LAUNCHING GROUND ATTACKS IN THE BORDER DISTRICT. HE STATED THAT THE VC/ NVA ARE RESTING AND REFITTING IN CAMBODIA AFTER MID- APRIL' S INTENSE FIGHTING. DI SPECULATED THAT THE ENEMY MAY LAUNCH ANOTHER OFFENSIVE AROUND MAY 19, IN HONOR OF HO CHI MINH' S BIRTHDAY, BUT HE HAS NO FIRM INTELLIGENCE ON VC/ NVA INTENTIONS. HE SAID, " SINCE WE CANNOT GO AND ATTACK THEM, WE WAIT FOR THEM AND THEN PUT THEM IN THE MEAT GRINDER WHEN THEY COME. THEY ALSO GRIND US." DI SAID THAT THE NINTH DIVISION HAD LOST SOME 70 KIA AND 300 WIA BETWEEN APRIL 11 AND APRIL 26 WHEN THE HONG NGU OFFENSIVE WAS AT ITS PEAK. HE INDICATED HE WAS PROUD OF HIS UNITS' PERFORMANCE AND NOTED THEY WERE BATTLE- SEASONED VETERANS OF AN LOC. DI SAID THAT HE HAS STRICTLY RATIONED GASOLINE USAGE BECAUSE SUPPLIES ARE SHORT.

3. JMC: COL. LOI, CHAIRMAN OF THE GVN/ JMC REGION VI DELEGATION, TOLD TWO VICE CONSULS MAY 2 THAT HE EXPECTS THE PRG DELEGATION TO THE JMC TO BE DEPLOYED SOON. THE CRUCIAL PROBLEM REMAINS THE SITE IN REGION VI WHERE THE PRG DELEGATES WILL EMERGE. THE GVN REFUSES TO APPROVE A SITE IN A GVN CONTROLLED OR DISPUTED AREA, LEST THE PRG CLAIM THE SITE TO BE UNDER ITS JURISDICTION. COL. LOI SAID THAT THE TRI PHAP AREA IN KIEN TUONG PROVINCE OR A SITE ALONG THE BA BEO CANAL IN NORTH CENTRAL DINH TUONG ARE SATISFACTORY, BUT IF THE PRG INSISTS UPON BEING PICKED UP ELSEWHERE, THE GVN COULD NOT GUARANTEE THE SAFETY OF ITS DELEGATION. COMMENT: COL. LOI' S REMARKS REFLECT GVN POLICY ON PICK- UPS DATING FROM THE FPJMC ERA, AND DO NOT NECESSARILY MEAN THAT THERE ARE ANY PLANS AFOOT FOR THE PRG TO SURFACE A JMC DELEGATION IN THE DELTA.

4. GVN ACTIVITY: (A) DINH TUONG POLICE LAST WEEK ARRESTED SEVERAL SUSPECTED VC SAPPERS. SOME WERE ARRESTED WHILE CARRYING HOLLOW COCONUTS CONTAINING PLASTIC EXPLOSIVES, AND A NUMBER OF ALREADY EMPLACED CHARGES WERE DISCOVERED AND DISARMED AS A RESULT OF INFORMATION OBTAINED IN THE OPERATION. ONE ARRESTED YOUTH ADMITTED INVOLVEMENT IN THE BOMBING OF THE VIET HAI RESTAURANT IN MY THO APRIL 23 (CAN THO 0239). THE POLICE INITIATED THEIR INVESTIGATION AND ARRESTS BASED UPON INFORMATION

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RECEIVED FROM AN INJURED MAN IN THE MY THO HOSPITAL. HOSPITAL AUTHORITIES REPORTED HIS ADMISSION TO THE POLICE WHO INTERROGATED HIM AND DISCOVERED HIM TO BE A SAPPER WHOSE CHARGE HAD EXPLODED PREMATURELY.

(B). THE DINH TUONG PROVINCE CHIEF, COL. NGUYEN VAN BONG, PLANS TO INVITE THE PRESS AND THE ICCS TO INTERVIEW THE CAPTURED SAPPERS. IF THE SUSPECTS ARE WILLING TO TALK, THEIR REVELATIONS

MIGHT FORCE THE " POLGARIANS" ON THE ICCS TO REVIEW THEIR FINDINGS CONCERNING THE VIET HAI RESTAURANT INCIDENT. EARLIER, THE ICCS, AS USUAL, HAD BEEN UNABLE TO FIX THE BLAME FOR THE TERRORIST ATTACK. BUT IF POLICE INTERROGATORS USED FORCE ON THE SUSPECTED SAPPERS, THE POLES AND HUNGARIANS MIGHT USE THE GVN' S MISTREATMENT OF THE PRISONERS TO DERAIL THE INVESTIGATION.

(C) RELATIONS BETWEEN ETHNIC CAMBODIANS AND VIETNAMESE IN BAC LIEU AND BA XUYEN ARE DETERIORATING AS CAMBODIANS BLAME GVN OFFICIALS FOR THE APRIL 3 ASSASSINATION OF THE INFLUENTIAL CAMBODIAN MONK SON THAL (CAN THO A-51). CAMBODIANS ACCUSE LAM XOANG HON, BAC LIEU' S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEPUTY AND CHAIRMAN OF THE PROVINCIAL DEMOCRACY PARTY, OF BEING THE PERPETRATOR OF THE ASSASSINATION. GVN PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES BLAME THE VC. THE CAMBODIANS REPORTEDLY HAVE LOST ALL FIATH IN THE SLUGGISH PROVINCIAL " INVESTIGATION" OF SON THAL' S MURDER. THE HEAD MONKS OF TWENTY CAMBODIAN PAGODAS HAVE PETITIONED PRESIDENT THIEU, PRIME MINISTER KHIEM AND THE SENATE AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR AN INDEPENDENT HIGH LEVEL INVESTIGATION. THE PETITIONS ACCUSE HON OF MASTERMINDING THE ASSASSINATION. TRACH PENH, A FORMER ASSEMBLY DEPUTY, WHO LED AN INDEPENDENT CAMBODIAN INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENT, HAS FLED TO SAIGON IN FEAR OF ASSASSINATION AT THE HANDS OF HON' S MINIONS. ON APRIL 30, PENH TOLD A VICE CONSUL THAT HE WAS CERTAIN HON WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR SON THAL' S DEATH, BECAUSE THE MONK HAD ACTIVELY PROTESTED INTIMIDATION, CORRUPTION, AND ELECTION- RIGGING BY LOCAL VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS WHICH VICTIMIZED THE PROVINCE' S CAMBODIANS. ACCORDING TO PENH, HON CONSIDERED THIS A PERSONAL INSULT AND WAS EAGER FOR REVENGE.

5. ICCS: A REGION VI ICCS CANADIAN WARRANT OFFICER REPORTED THE JEEP HE WAS DRIVING WAS FIRED UPON ABOUT 3 KM WEST OF CAI
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973SAIGON08325
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SAIGON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730542/aaaaivzp.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags: ANOMALY
Review Date: 23 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Aug-2001 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <04-Oct-2001 by willialc>; RELEASED <23-Oct-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <29-Nov-2001 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> mcm 980130
Subject: SITREP FOR MAY 10, 1973 FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL CAN THO BEING REPEATED QUOTE CAN THO 0301 E. O. 11652: GDS TAGS: MOPS, MARR, CA, CB, HU, ID , PL, VS SUBJECT: SITREP FOR MAY 10, 1973
TAGS: PINS, MILI, PINT
To: EA
JEC PARIS
SECSTATE WASHDC
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005

